



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Lyons Community School

14K586

**223 Graham Street
Brooklyn
NY 11206**

Principal: Taeko Onishi

Dates of review: December 13 - 14, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Rose-marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Lyons Community School is a middle/high school with 549 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 45% Black, 53% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school establishment of structures to engage students in learning fosters students' individuality and promotes both personal and academic development.
 - The schools' advisory program ensures that every student has an adult who knows and supports his needs. Students and teachers meet daily in small groups and engage in personal goal setting, conferencing, and independent reading. As a result, students' social-emotional needs and overall development are well supported.
 - Many students articulate that the school culture is a positive push that propels them to work hard and be successful. They highly appreciate open forum for discussion in town hall meetings and parents appreciate the caring staff. The result is an environment that supports the needs of the students.
- Administrators and teachers analyze data gathered from summative and formative assessments in order to monitor student performance and address the learning needs of students.
 - The schools' Design Your Own assessment team creates or chooses assessments that are aligned to the standards. Beginning of the school year assessment indicated a school-wide weakness in reading hence independent reading and reflection is embedded in the advisory program to accelerate student growth.
 - Teacher teams are beginning to analyze student work in addition to data from formative and summative assessments in order to clearly understand students' performance level and their next learning steps. The middle school literacy team reviewed students' writing samples resulting in purposeful brainstorming of instructional strategies
- The school has developed focused goals that are clearly delineated into all school planning documents thereby guiding school-wide improvement plans to accelerate learning.
 - The Comprehensive Education Plan, Principals' Performance Review, as well as an action plan comprehensibly outline the goal to improve student performance in mathematics, attendance, and students reading a minimum of twenty-five books, in an effort to boost school performance.
 - Summer planning involved school directors and teachers analysis of a wide range of data that focused on student performance and overall school improvement. As a result, ninth grade students now participate in a revised Algebra Regents curriculum leading to higher passing rates.

- Effective partnerships support majority of students and families in continual learning thereby promoting students' personal growth.
 - The dean team provides professional development on classroom management and intervention strategies to support teachers. They work with teachers in groups and also provide individual supports as needed. This initiative has resulted in a decrease in classroom disruption and is accelerating students' focus on learning.
 - Strategic partnerships with a number of organizations support both the academic and socio-emotional growth of students. Students engage in college level course work, field study, art, and youth development activities. Students and parents appreciate the range of offerings that foster academic and personal development.
- School leaders and faculty have developed protocols, at set intervals, which enables them to reflect on the success of data gathering and analysis and the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.
 - English language arts teachers participated in summer training and planning on incorporating Common Core State Standards in assessment. As a result, curriculum that embed the new standards were created for grades six through twelve and staff is now working on creating similar assessments.
 - Recent changes to the web-based assessment sharing tool reflect the schools commitment to regularly reviewing how student performance data is shared with families. The previous tool was not user friendly hence the school adopted a new system that allows students and families to get real time data thereby making student performance transparent.

What the school needs to improve

- Engage teachers in the creation of rigorous academic tasks that address the learning needs of students in order to improve students' academic performance.
 - Despite the fact that teachers engage collaboratively in departments and on grade level teams, the practice of collectively creating rigorous tasks for students is not yet a practice. The result is the absence of engaging tasks that challenge students thinking thereby hindering academic growth.
 - Teachers are knowledgeable of the performance data of students they teach. However, planning documents and academic tasks do not reflect preparation for the diverse needs of the students. For example, a Limited English Proficient student was given the same task even though the teacher was aware of the student's needs. This hampers students' ability to fully participate in instruction, reduces engagement, and debilitates growth.
- Elevate goal setting so that all teachers are setting clear and rigorous learning goals that will guide pedagogy and result in student ownership of their learning.
 - Teacher teams focus on subgroups of students based on data gleaned from formative and summative data. Setting SMART learning for these students is not yet a practice, thereby limiting the impact of the work on student attainment.

- Although teachers guide students in goal setting during advisory, the goals are personal and do not guide next learning steps. For example, one student's goal was "to get better in math." This goal has no clear measurable steps and therefore does not inform pedagogy or guide student action in goal attainment.
- Deepen differentiated instruction to include a wider range of entry points and challenges for students in all content areas in an effort to maximize student growth.
 - Whereas the school ascribes to inquiry as the most meaningful vehicle for learning, the practice of providing students with multiple opportunities to fully engage in learning activities is limited. Most classroom instruction provide one activity for all students regardless of their performance level or learning style, thereby limiting entry points for students in the curriculum.
 - Few teachers demonstrated the ability to offer a strong lesson with multiple entry points for students. Many observed lessons were whole class instruction with limited opportunities for student interaction and dialogue. This limits student's ability to learn from each other and maximize academic growth.
- Review organizational decisions to ensure that clear structures that support student learning needs and the schools' goals are in place so that growth is realized.
 - The school has grown to grade capacity, and supervisors have realized the need to reevaluate the philosophy and organizational decisions based on the learning needs of the students. This process is in the beginning stages hence the effectiveness of these decisions cannot be gauged.
 - The school schedule students for one hour instructional learning blocks. However, teachers' competency with classroom management and delivering engaging lessons for this duration is a challenge. This results in instructional time not used to adequately support the academic needs of the learners
- Intensify the observation process to include thorough analysis of student work products and feedback given, to ensure that there is a strong focus on academic rigor thereby elevating pedagogical development.
 - Classroom observations and school protocols does not reflect a clear instructional focus. Evidence of student work products along with teacher feedback reveals inconsistencies. Many classrooms were void of student work products and feedback provided did not give students the opportunity to participate in the learning process. The lack of a clear focus to elevate rigor inhibits both professional growth and student achievement.
 - Supervisory feedback to teachers based on classroom observations demonstrates inconsistency between teachers' performance and rating given. Despite the fact that a classroom observation report indicated that a collaborative team teaching teacher was struggling with classroom management and lesson delivery, a satisfactory rating was given. This practice does not drive teacher improvement and result in incongruence in instruction throughout the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Lyons Community School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?	X			
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?		X		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		X		
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?		X		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?	X						
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		X					
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		X					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?		X					
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X					
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X					
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed